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update

Vol. 4, no. 10, 13 May, 1991
Published by the Division of Information, United Nations Development Programme, One UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017

news and events

Atlanta. Ghana and Nigeria have dramatically reduced the incidence of *dracunculiasis*, or Guinea worm disease, according to recent survey results issued by the US-based Carter Presidential Center in Georgia. The Center heads a global Guinea worm eradication campaign supported by UNDP, UNICEF, the US Agency for International Development, the US Peace Corps and the World Health Organization.

Guinea worm disease is caused by a parasite in contaminated drinking water. In Ghana, the number of cases of the disease fell to 117,000 in 1990 from 179,000 in 1989, a decline of nearly 35 per cent. The number of cases in Nigeria dropped 38 per cent, to 394,000 in 1990 from 640,000 in 1989.

"These substantial reductions are added proof that the two most highly endemic countries are well on their way to meeting their eradication targets," says Dr. Donald Hopkins, who directs the Center's Guinea worm eradication efforts. Ghana's government is committed to eliminating the disease by 1993. Nigeria has set 1995 as its target date.

New York. Stuart MacIntire, a senior adviser in UNDP's Division of Private Sector in Development (DPSD), led a fact-finding team to six Eastern European countries in February and March to analyze UNDP's role in economic reforms there and to develop a privatization strategy for UNDP in the region. The countries covered were Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. "One of the key objectives in every Eastern European country," says Mr. MacIntire, "is to develop its private sector."

Taking into account the special needs of Eastern European nations, DPSD is co-ordinating with the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe to expand UNDP's assistance to public and private sectors in each of the six nations. "Our overriding concern," says Mr. MacIntire, "is to work closely with governments of these countries to establish viable private enterprises operating in an acceptable environment that will attract entrepreneurs and investors."

Recently, DPSD engaged Roberto Toso, Chile's former Vice- Minister of Finance, to assist Morocco in outlining a plan to privatize 112 companies in that country. If successful, it is expected that this model can be applied to other developing countries that are incorporating entrepreneurship in their structural adjustment programmes.

New York. UNDP has approved $250,000 in seed money to field 10 United Nations Volunteer (UNV) specialists to Iran, Iraq and Turkey to take part in Kurdish relief efforts. The funds are from a $4 million Special Programme to help meet the most urgent needs of countries affected by the Gulf Crisis. Japan has also donated $1 million to the cause. The 10 UNVs will join seven others who travelled to the region last month to assist in emergency operations.

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as of 15 April, the number of Iraqis -- who are mostly Kurds -- along the Turkish border had grown to almost 600,000. Another 900,000 are seeking sanctuary in Iran.

A UNDP Gulf Task Force, co-ordinated by the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe, was established in February. The Task Force and UNV headquarters in Geneva will work out the logistics of despatching the UNVs. Brenda McSweeney, UNV's Executive Co-ordinator, appealed for more volunteers with experience in emergency and disaster relief work.

Meanwhile, under an 18 April memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq, Bernt Bernander has been appointed Co-ordinator to implement humanitarian relief programmes in Iraq. Mr. Bernander was formerly an Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Office for Project Services.

New York. UNDP has approved $250,000 to strengthen 30 national and regional Arab non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) in institution building and participatory development. This umbrella project will provide seed money for regional workshops on human-centred development which will bring together government representatives, UNDP and NGOs. Funds will also be used to launch anti-smoking campaigns, initiate career and drug counselling for young people and address the issue of unemployment among Arab youths.

Cairo. The challenge of providing food for the eight billion inhabitants of the world in 2020 was the subject of an interregional consultation in Egypt from 22-24 April. Jointly organized by the World Food Council and UNDP, the meeting was attended by more than 30 policy makers in agricultural research and technology.

Participants discussed food production challenges and policies governing the development and transfer of agricultural technology. They examined such issues as training, improvement of physical and institutional infrastructure, and sources of domestic and external financial support for agricultural research. They also addressed the need for policies which enhance research on environmentally sustainable technology.

Turin. Providing support for the poorest women in over 100 developing countries through projects of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was the focus of a seminar here from 21-24 April. Participants from 14 countries took part in the seminar, which was part of the fourth global meeting of national committees of UNIFEM, a UNDP-administered organization. Previous gatherings were held in Nairobi in 1985, Belgium in 1986 and Finland in 1988.

The national committees provide financial and technical support to women involved in food production and small businesses, and ensure that women have a say in the development of their countries. The committees also press governments to increase funding for UNIFEM projects and raise money from the private sector.

Algiers. The recent evolution of East-West relations and its impact on world economic growth was the theme of a conference in the Algerian capital from 4-6 May. Jointly organized by the Algerian government, the UN and UNDP, it attracted high-level decision-makers, eminent personalities and experts in international relations. Participating organizations included the Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Department of International Economics and Social Affairs, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank.

The gathering served as a brainstorming session in preparation for the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva from 4-5 July. Participants examined the prospects for peace, security and disarmament and the impact on the international economy and developing countries. They reviewed the situation in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and analyzed the implications on the world economy.

New York. Dr. Mohamed Abdalla Nour, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe was awarded the Order of the Cedars, Commander Level -- one of Lebanon's highest awards -- on 30 March. The tribute was in appreciation of his services as Director-General of the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas in Beirut from 1978 to 1981. He was the Centre's Deputy Director-General from 1978 to 1981. "I consider it a special honour coming from a country I so deeply cherish and greatly love," said Dr. Nour in accepting the commendation. A formal presentation ceremony will be held at a later date.

projects approved by the action committee

(all approvals subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

10 April 1991

Namibia. UNDP is supporting a project to reorganize government ministries and establish improved public management systems, particularly in budget administration. Proposed UNDP contribution: $500,000. Third-party cost-sharing by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation: $1.3 million. Funds

are to pay for public administration experts, training and equipment. Government-executed and implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister. (NAM/90/501)

Pakistan. This project is part of a large-scale effort to boost livestock and dairy production in the Province of Punjab where cattle are raised mainly by small farmers. UNDP's technical assistance includes introducing improved techniques in milk production, marketing and quality control. It is also supporting formation of smallholders groups and extension services in livestock breeding, disease control and fodder production. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is providing a $16 million loan for the purchase of milk refrigeration and collection equipment. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1.6 million for an expert in livestock and dairy development, consultants, fellowships and study tours. Executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and implemented by the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Government of Punjab. (PAK/88/072)

Senegal. The UN Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) will build upon earlier achievements in helping the Dakar-based Ecological Monitoring Centre. With this follow-up phase, UNSO will help upgrade the Centre to provide environmental monitoring services for planners. An UNSO trust fund of $6,968,295 from Denmark will be used for experts, purchase of a satellite image receiving station, aerial surveys, computer equipment and training. Government-executed and implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Water. (SEN/90/X01)

Tanzania. This project is part of a medium-term programme to improve Tanzania's public service. UNDP assistance to the Civil Service Department includes devising strategies for staff reduction, establishing new administrative policies, introducing management training programmes and expanding information systems. The project will also support the creation of management audit systems. Proposed UNDP contribution: $2.8 million for advisers, workshops, fellowships and equipment. Government-executed and implemented by the Civil Service Department, Office of the President. (URT/90/013-URT/90/501)

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Burundi. Under this project, UNDP is helping the government devise a national training programme for Burundi's civil servants. The goal is to ensure a competent and efficient public sector for implementing crucial economic reforms. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,233,500 for an education planner, a public administration specialist, a UN Volunteer (UNV) specialist, training and administrative costs. Executed by the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UN/DTCD) and implemented by the Ministry of Public Services. (BDI/90/010)

Burundi. By promoting agricultural diversification, this project seeks to upgrade livestock production in Burundi's rural areas. UNDP will support a pilot programme to assist 300 farmers in livestock breeding and improved veterinary care. Proposed UNDP contribution: $2,627,000 for UNV specialists, subcontracts, training and equipment. Executed by FAO and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. (BDI/90/013)

Burundi. To curb overcrowding in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, UNDP is helping to develop four towns outside the capital city in a move to redistribute the population. Training in urban planning for national staff will be emphasized. The project seeks to stimulate employment, generate self-help community initiatives and provide housing and other basic urban services. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,597,800 for a community development specialist, subcontracts for topographical studies, fellowships and planning. Government-executed in association with the UN Centre for Human Settlements. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Works and Urban Development. (BDI/89/022)

Chile. UNDP will provide supplementary assistance over a two-year period to guide the

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Chilean government in macro-economic management, domestic and foreign trade policies, fiscal administration and entrepreneurship and technology development. Proposed UNDP contribution: $798,500. Government cost-sharing: $378,700. Funds are to pay for consultants, subcontracts for surveys, training, travel and administrative costs. Government-executed and implemented by the *Ministerio de Planificacion y Cooperacion.* (CHI/90/002)

Chile. UNDP's technical assistance to government ministries is expected to provide Chileans with better health care, education and housing. Proposed UNDP contribution: $500,000 for consultants, training and administrative costs. Government-executed and implemented by the *Ministerio de Planificacion y Cooperacion.* (CHI/90/501)

Regional projects:

Africa. UNDP's support for the African Capacity Building Initiative (ACBI) includes setting up a management team that will help carry out ACBI's work programme for the first four years. Co-sponsored by the World Bank and the African Development Bank, ACBI was recently launched to develop a core of African experts who will help manage development in the region. Proposed UNDP contribution: $9.8 million for consultants, national capacity evaluations, training workshops, board meetings, equipment and supplies. For the first year, the project will be executed by the World Bank, and thereafter by the African Capacity Building Foundation. (RAF/91/006)

Africa. Special attention will be given to structural transformation of African economies through support for the National Long-Term Perspective Studies and Programmes. This regional project will help participating countries create follow-up initiatives to economic reforms and establish a regional information system. It will also support the formation of a network of African experts in long-term development planning. Priority areas include restructuring public expenditures, preparing action plans and disseminating aid co-ordination techniques. Proposed UNDP contribution: $9,013,000 for two management teams, consultants, a study fund and sub-regional workshops. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services. (RAF/91/006)

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